posed to be developed as autonomous colleges by the end of the VII Plan. The UGC has formulated detailed guidelines for implementation of the Scheme. Every University has been requested to select suitable colleges with the approval of the concerned State Governments. The autonomous status has to be conferred by the University concerned in accordance with the provisions of its Act and Statutes. According to the existing provisions in the Delhi University Act, only those colleges conducting courses of study in Medicine, Technology, Music or Fine Arts can be given autonomous status. A Bill to amend this provision to enable the University to confer autonomous status on any college affiliated to it is now before Parliament. It will be for the University to confer autonomous status on its colleges after this amendment becomes effective.

(c) Some teachers' organisations including the Delhi University Teachers Association have expressed some reservation against the Scheme of autonomous colleges. They apprehend that autonomy will delink the colleges from the parent University; management of colleges will become arbitrary; their terms and conditions of srvice will be modified to their disadvantage; the scheme will promote elitism; etc.

(d) The Scheme of autonomous colleges is conceived as an experiment in decentralisation of academic administration. It will enable colleges to frame their own courses of study, prescribe their content, hold examinations, etc.

Static growth rate of country's Population

50. SHRIMATI SUDHA VIJAY JOSHI: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 249 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 27th April, 1988 and state whether it is a fact that the birth rate has remained static during the last few years and the population control programmes have not brought it down?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI MOTI LAL VORA): Annual Estimates of birth rate are available from Sample Registration System of Registrar General, India. The latest available estimates for 1985 and 1986 show that the birth rates are 32.9 and 32.6 per 1000 population respectively which show a steady decline from the level of 33.9 for the year 1984.

Recognition to Telugu University in A. P.

51. SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Andhra Pradesh Government has urged the University Grants Commission for recognition to the recently set up Telugu University;

(b) if so, whether the recognition has been granted by the University Grants Commission; and

(c) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI L. P. SHAHI): (a) The Telugu University established under an Act of the Andhra Pradesh Legislature does not require any formal recognition by the University Grants Commission. However, since the University was established in 1986, it requires to be declared fit by the UGC for the purpose of financial assistance from Central sources. The Government of Andhra Pradesh have requested the UGC to declare the Telugu University fit to receive assistance.

(b) and (c) The Telugu University is yet to be declared fit to receive Central assistance by the UGC. The Commission has suggested certain amendments to the Act, under which the University has been established. These include provisions relating to the appointment of the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor and composition of the Academic Council. The State Government have not so far agreed to make these amendments.

Shifting of Eastern Zone Cultural Centre from Shantiniketan to Calcutta

52. SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to shift the Eastern Zone Cultural Centre from Shantiniketan to Calcutta;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the academics and intellectuals of West Bengal have objected to the shifting of the Centre; and

(d) if so, what action has been taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI L. P. SHAHI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) It is understood that the Governing Body of the East Zone Cultural Centre, have under consideration such a shift. due to logistical reasons, with particular reference to difficulties in telecommunication/transport links. However, no formal reference has been received by the Government.

Government have, however, received a representation from the Chairman of the Bolpur Municipality protesting against such a move. Government have also seen press reports stating that the matter would be taken up by the academics and intellectuals of West Bengal.

Strike by the Students of National School of Drama

53. SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the students of the National School of Drama in Delhi had gone on a fortnight long hunger strike in April,-May, 1988; and

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor and the action taken by Government to remove the grievances of the students?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI L. P. SHAHI): (a) The students of the National School of Drama in Delhi had gone on a relay hunger strike in School premises from 6-5-88 and had called off their agitation on 13-5-88.

(b) The IInd year students of the School demanded postponement of the final examination scheduled on 27-4-88 and extending the term of the session as all the courses had not been satisfactorily completed.

While one examination on Modern Indian Drama was held on 13-5-88, others were postponed. To cover the left-over courses, special classes have been organised from 1—30 July, 1988. Examinations are now scheduled from 3-8-88 and the students are attending the crash course and preparing for their final examination.